

APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

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for

REDUNDANT INPUT POWER SYSTEM

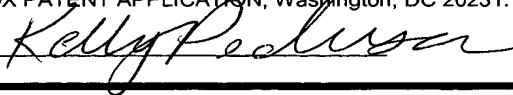
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REDUNDANT INPUT POWER SYSTEM

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[1] The present invention is generally directed to a power system for providing power to a plurality of loads, such as, a computer system. The present invention is more particularly directed to such a power system which is capable of being sourced by redundant sources to provide flexibility and reliability.

[2] There are many applications where a power system must provide reliable power to the system which it powers. A computer system is one example.

[3] Previous computer systems were generally provided with their own AC input power supplies. These AC "front-end" supplies produced positive DC voltage outputs. From these positive DC voltage outputs, power subsystems produced mid- and low-rail voltages. When these computer systems needed to be adapted for use in the Telecom industry, power system redesign was required due to the -48 V DC voltages available to power the computer system. In the end, the computer system power supplies for the Telecom industry were difficult to design, required higher component density, were more expensive, and required long lead-times. To provide power supply redundancy for reliability, two similar supplies were generally employed.

[4] The present invention addresses the above issues. For example, it provides a power system which may use -48 V DC directly to provide the necessary mid- and low-rail voltages. In accordance with a further feature, the present invention provides a power system which provides all of the voltages necessary for powering a Telecom industry computer system directly from the existing power environment negating the need for new "front-end" supply development. In accordance with a further feature provided by an embodiment of the present invention, redundant source inputs may be readily accommodated whether the source inputs are direct DC sources or DC sources derived from a separate AC supply. Also, such redundant sources may be mixed sources of AC "front-end" sources and DC sources. This permits the computer system to operate from both AC and DC feeds so that either feed can drop out and the computer will still be powered.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[5] The invention provides a power system including a plurality of source inputs that are connectable to a plurality of input sources, an OR circuit coupled to the source inputs and having an output, and a power monitor coupled to the OR circuit output that provides a control signal responsive to a sufficient source voltage at the OR circuit output. The system further includes a power control circuit that is coupled to the OR circuit output and responsive to the control signal, provides a working voltage, and at least one converter circuit that converts the working voltage to a supply voltage.

[6] In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the OR circuit is a diode OR circuit. Schottky type diodes may be used to reduce power consumption. A power switch may couple the working voltage to at least one converter circuit. The power switch may be a power FET.

[7] In accordance with further features of the present invention, the power control circuit may be further responsive to command signals to provide the working voltage. The at least one converter circuit may provide at least one of the command signals. The at least one converter circuit may include mid-rail converter and/or a low-rail converter.

[8] The invention further provides a method of providing a supply voltage comprising providing a plurality of source input voltages, ORing the source input voltages to provide a source voltage, monitoring the source voltage, generating a control signal responsive to the source voltage being above a given level, responsive to the control signal, providing a working voltage from the source voltage and converting the working voltage to a supply voltage.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[9] The foregoing aspects and many of the attended advantages of this invention will become more readily appreciated as the same become better understood by reference to the following detailed description, when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing, wherein the sole figure is a schematic block diagram of an embodiment of a power system of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[10] In the following detailed description of an exemplary embodiment of the invention, reference is made to the accompanying drawing, which forms a part hereof. The detailed description and drawing illustrates specific exemplary
5 embodiments by which the invention may be practiced. These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention. It is understood that other embodiments may be utilized, and other changes may be made, without departing from the spirit or scope of the present invention. The following detailed description is therefore not to be taken in a limiting sense, and the
10 scope of the present invention is defined by the appended claims.

[11] Referring now to the sole figure, it illustrates a power system **10** configured in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The power system **10** generally includes a plurality of source input terminals **12, 14, 16, 18, 20,** and **22**, an OR circuit **30**, a standby converter **50**, a power control circuit **60**, and a
15 plurality of voltage converters **70**.

[12] The input terminals **12, 14, 16, 18, 20,** and **22** permit the power system **10** to be coupled to a plurality of input sources **80**. The input sources include power sources **82, 84,** and **86**. Although three input sources have been illustrated in the figure, it will be noted that any number of input sources may be accommodated
20 by the power system **10**. In addition, the input sources may be mixed input sources. For example, one or more of the input sources may be a direct feed of a DC voltage, such as -48 V DC, while another one or more of the input sources may be an AC power supply which converts AC voltage to a DC output voltage of, for example, -48 V DC.

[13] The input terminals **12, 14, 16, 18, 20,** and **22** are coupled to the OR circuit **30**. The OR circuit **30** may be a diode power OR circuit and include diodes **32, 34, 36, 38, 40,** and **42**. Each pair of diodes, **32** and **34, 36** and **38,** and **40** and **42**, forms an OR circuit corresponding to each of the input sources **82, 84,** and **86**. The diodes **32, 36,** and **40** are supply diodes and diodes **34, 36,** and **42** are
25 return diodes. In ORing the input sources together, the OR circuit **30** provides a
30 source voltage at its output across nodes **44** and **46**.

[14] The standby converter **50** comprises a voltage converter to produce a standby voltage rail. It is coupled across the output of the OR circuit **30** and produces the standby voltage rail, whenever the input voltage is sufficient. The standby converter **50** provides a stable standby voltage rail to the power control circuit **60** over line **52** when it detects a sufficient source voltage at the OR circuit output across nodes **44** and **46**.

[15] The power control circuit **60** comprises a power control and monitor which is coupled to node **44** of the OR circuit **30** and to a power switch **66**. The power control circuit **60** uses the standby rail **52** relative to node **44** for its energy source. Responsive to a valid standby voltage **52**, and other command inputs, the power control circuit **60** controls the power switch **66** via output signal line **64**.

[16] The power switch **66**, in accordance with this embodiment, is a power field effect transistor (FET) which is turned on by the working voltage on line **64**. When the FET **66** is turned on, the working voltage node **46** relative to node **44** is provided to the plurality of converters **70** to enable the converters to provide the necessary voltages for use by the system powered by the power system **10**. As previously mentioned, the system to be powered by the power system **10** may be a computer system and more particularly a computer system associated with a Telecom environment.

[17] The plurality of converters comprise a mid-rail converter **72** and a low-rail converter **74**. From the working voltage provided by the power control circuit **60** via the turned on power switches **66**, the mid-rail converter **72** may provide +12 V DC. The low-rail converter is coupled to the mid-rail converter for using its +12 V DC output to provide low-rail voltage outputs of, for example, +5.0 V DC, +3.3 V DC, and -12.0 V DC. The converters **72** and **74** are coupled to an input **68** of the power control circuit **60** to provide command signals to the power control circuit **60**. The command signals may be status signals, for example. The power control **60** may further receive at its input **68** command signals from other sources such as physical switches, fault detection or control circuits, and/or remote power control logic signals.

[18] Although the OR circuit **30** is shown herein as being a diode or circuit, it may take other forms. For example, the diodes **30** of circuit **30** may be replaced by controlled field effect transistors, or other circuitry.

[19] In operation, a DC supply voltage, such as -48 V DC may be provided to the input terminals **12**, **14**, **16**, **18**, **20**, and **22** by redundant input sources **82**, **84**, and **86**. The input sources may be one or more direct DC voltage feeds or -48 V DC derived from an AC power supply. Supplied current flows through diodes **32**, **36**, and **40** to node **44**. This supplies current to the standby converter **50** and the power control circuit **60**. Current returned to the input sources is from node **46** through diodes **34**, **38**, and **42**. Whenever there is a sufficient supply voltage across nodes **44** and **46**, the standby converter **50** provides a control voltage or standby voltage rail on line **52** to the power control circuit **60**. This standby voltage may be regulated voltage to power the power control circuit and other circuits in a manner known in the art. Responsive to receiving the standby voltage from the standby converter **50** and command inputs at input **68**, the power control circuit **60** provides a working voltage on line **64** which is provided to the mid-rail converter **72** through the power FET **66**. The mid-rail converter, from the working voltage, generates its output which may be +12 V DC. The output of the mid-rail converter is also provided to the low-rail converter which, from the output of the mid-rail converter generates its outputs. The low-rail converter may provide, for example, +5.0 V DC, +3.3 V DC, and -12.0 V DC.

[20] As may be seen from the foregoing, the power system **10** may receive power from redundant inputs. The redundant inputs may be of virtually any number and may be mixed inputs to add to the flexibility and reliability of the power system **10**. Hence, any one of the redundant inputs may fail, and the power system **10** will be able to still power its associated load. The input sources **82**, **84**, and **86** may be within the same chassis housing the computers, or may be fed over cables to the input terminals of the system **10**. In addition, the diodes of the OR circuit **30** prevent damage to the system should an input source be coupled to the system in reversed polarity. Thus, protection is provided against damaging the

power system **10**, the power sources **80**, or system wiring. In addition, this also prevents associated breakers or fuses from tripping.

[21] Although the present invention has been described in considerable detail with reference to certain preferred embodiments, other embodiments are possible. Therefore, the spirit or scope of the appended claims should not be limited to the description of the embodiments contained herein. It is intended that the invention resides in the claims.